

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MORELLE) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

God, You are our savior, our strength, and our song.

Lord, even as we reflect on these words of the Psalmist, call to our minds how often throughout history, and in our own lives, You have been our salvation.

Help us to recall how You have intervened time and again in the health and welfare of our loved ones as well as our own.

May we recollect how often You have set Your shield before us in the presence of our enemies, in moments of despair, and in the face of harm.

Give us reason to remember the innumerable times You have protected us from our own foolish actions and prideful behavior.

Inspire us by these memories of Your saving acts, large and small, that we would allow them to shape our present.

Save us, we pray. We beseech You, O Lord, grant that all that we say today would reflect our gratitude for the success You have given us. May all that we do today be a prosperous celebration of Your redemptive love to us and to those around us.

Salvation belongs to You, O Lord. May Your blessings remain upon Your people. It is in Your merciful name we pray.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 11(a) of House Resolution 188, the Journal of the last day's proceedings is approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. BOST led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under clause 5(d) of rule XX, the Chair announces to the House that, in light of the resignation of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STIVERS), the whole number of the House is 430.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize May as Mental Health Awareness Month. The focus of this campaign is to break down the stigma surrounding mental health.

Each year, millions of Americans face the reality of living with a mental illness. By breaking the stigma and talking about depression, anxiety, and other conditions, we can help those affected to seek the quality care that they deserve.

After spending the past year locked down and secluded from society, it is more important than ever to check in on your loved ones. If you are suffering or feel alone, please reach out for help. It is important to remember that you are not alone.

Mr. Speaker, by bringing attention to mental health, we can elevate the conversations surrounding mental health. We are focusing on prioritizing mental health and acknowledging it is okay to not be okay.

This month, reach out to your loved ones and check in. By starting the conversation, we are one step closer to ending the stigma surrounding mental health.

RECOGNIZING JAKE WEGNER

(Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share an uplifting story about a young man from my congressional district.

Jake Wegner, a senior at Central College in Pella, Iowa, took his first at bat after beating cancer twice.

Jake's first battle with cancer began when he was diagnosed with neuroblastoma before the start of his high school senior baseball season.

After recovering from surgery, Jake enrolled at Central College, where he finished his first semester, but upon returning home for a checkup, he learned that the cancer had relapsed.

Jake kept his faith strong and family close while he endured chemotherapy for the next 15 months, and in January of 2018, he was ready to begin classes again.

In yesterday's game against Simpson College, after 3 years of being cancer-free, Jake took his first at bat for senior night.

Jake, your story of following your dreams and overcoming adversity is an inspiration to all of us, and I couldn't be prouder to represent you in Congress.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

IMPROVING VA ACCOUNTABILITY TO PREVENT SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION ACT OF 2021

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2704) to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the equal employment opportunity functions of Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2704

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Improving VA Accountability To Prevent Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Act of 2021".

SEC. 2. IMPROVEMENTS TO EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY FUNCTIONS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) ALIGNMENT OF EEO DIRECTOR.—

(1) REPORTING AND DUTIES.—Subsection (h) of section 516 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by striking "The provisions" and inserting "(1) The provisions"; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(2) Beginning not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this paragraph, in carrying out paragraph (1), the Secretary shall ensure that the official of the Department who serves as the Equal Employment Opportunity Director of the Department—

"(A) reports directly to the Deputy Secretary with respect to the functions under this section; and

"(B) does not also serve in a position that has responsibility over personnel functions of the Department or other functions that conflict with the functions under this section.".

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Such section is further amended—

(A) in subsection (b)(1), by inserting ", in accordance with subsection (h)(2)," after "an Assistant Secretary or a Deputy Assistant Secretary"; and

(B) in subsection (e)(1)(A), by striking "the Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration" and inserting "the Secretary".

(b) ALIGNMENT OF EEO PROGRAM MANAGERS.—Such section is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(i) In accordance with subsection (b), not later than December 31, 2021, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that each